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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.



DECORATIVE FEATURES OF TRANS-ATLAN- TIC STEAMERS.

DECORATION of the chief compartments allotted to first-class passengers on transatlantic steamers, is recognized as an element of financial value by the companies through its attractiveness to voyageurs, and accordingly large sums are expended on this score. The marine designer of the vessel, like the medieval architect in his relations with painters, sculptors and carvers, whose work was a portion of his scheme, takes into account in planning saloons and their approaches the decorator's requirements, especially in providing handsome *coup d'œil*, leaving him to do his best with necessitated structural lines, beams, pillars, projections and symmetrical dispositions of space.

The companion way, with its broad and magnificent sweep of brass-edged stairs, affords a fine opportunity for display of mahogany panel work, with its rich golden color and handsome veins brought out with full effect, in perpendicular position against sides, owing to the abundant light, and set off by the rich antique brasswork of the inevitable clock and weather guaging weather-glass facing the descent, not unfrequently further advanced by flowering plants.

The general aspect of the main saloons is lightsome and even gay, due to lining and furnishing of dark woods and by skilful management of colors on remaining surfaces. Much has been done on the later steamers to give saloons a more aerial aspect by sunk panels in the mahogany and hardwood framing of the sides of birdseye maple, with its delicate yellow hue, beautifully mottled, suggesting that it must have absorbed the sunlight in its growth, and forming a splendid ground for ornamental painting in deep or light tints, the forms of ornament having all the appearance of inlays in colored wood. Gilded capitals of pillars, pilasters and cornices, moldings picked out in gold, and various brass mountings add to the enlivening aspect. Nor must we fail to note the handsome marquetry flooring introduced in some of the later vessels, together with rich rugs and wolf and tiger skins. The hues and forms which go to make saloon decoration are made vastly more effective by the direct rays from the skylights, whether embossed or in delicately-tinted designs.

The rounded seats of the revolving chairs, with rich-figured plush, and polished mahogany or birdseye maple frames, contribute their share to the enlivening aspect of the modern saloon. The details of ornamentation on each side have the advantage of being lighted up from the opposite portholes. The favorite and prevailing colors in textiles are blues, greens, crimsons, olives and browns.

The sideboards between the two main entrances, in mahogany, oak or walnut, either extending the whole breadth between the mosaic glass doors or portières, are invariably splendid specimens of cabinet work. The mirrors at back, often with an architectural entablature, supported by pilasters, rest on marble shelves, with nickel or brass rails in front. To fill out the space between, mirror and library cases on each side, decorative panels and fluted pilasters in color and gilt, are commonly introduced. The panels hiding the ranges of drawers below, containing the silverware, on being opened can, without being unhinged, be pushed into and subsequently withdrawn from narrow side recesses.

Library cases, with pianos and surmounting mirrors, or in the place of the latter, tinted windows, lighted from a prism or skylight, behind and out of sight, appear on the opposite extremity of the saloon. The sashes of the cases are usually of gilt brass, which has a pleasing brightening aspect. Beneath usually appear ornamented panels, such as hand-painted designs on birdseye, let into the darker wood of the frame.

The *Adriatic* may be particularly cited for artistic application of papier mache on panels, framed in mahogany, of small repeated leaf patterns, which, with the ground, are of sand-like hue, the panels bordered with bands of blue, red, lilac, tawny brown and gilt, the lower portion of the upright bands being fluted. The same pattern of molding encircles the pillars of the main saloon, with their gilded moldings; the ceiling beams show the same material in arabesque forms. In the ladies saloon papier mache panels, with petite figures in relief, are combined with others of birdseye maple, showing hand painted flowers, plain panels of same wood, and panels of fretty scroll work. It is employed in raised arabesque forms to decorate the ceiling of the Alaska, the border moldings being picked out in blue and gold.

Some ingenious metallic designs appear in the mounting of

electric lamps, where the attachments are by side brackets. In a steamer of the Guion line, a chandelier of wrought iron, composed of tendrils, leaves, bands and twisted spikes, with linked supporters, hangs from a lofty altitude beneath the skylight, with small lamps irregularly set like luminous fruit, shining out on the painted maple panels of what appears like a square floorless room, then scattering rays on the tiers of plants resting on the beams in line with the main ceiling.

A fine feature in the *Urania*, regarded constructively or decoratively, is a large oval mosaic room in gallery form above the main saloon, with well in center with handsome iron balusters, both the room and saloon being illumined by the skylight. The surrounding mahogany sofa seats are upholstered in velvet green figured plush; surmounted at back by panels of birdseye maple, each having painted façade of a Doric temple with a harp between the pilasters. The piano itself is wholly of birdseye maple.

Some inspiring influence would seem to have affected not a few decorators in dealing with ladies' saloons. With rich textiles, luxurious couches, painted paneling, colorings in which bright and warm tints contrast with ethereal hues, and with gold-surfaced cornices throwing up their light on ceilings of enameled white, they seem to woo to the *dolce far niente* of the Italian. Blue and olive are generally the predominating hues of the textile coverings. A delightful ornamentation of the ladies' saloon of the *Urania* appears on the series of panels surrounding and cloaking an obtruding mast. Each of these has a light blue ground, on which is painted in the highest style of art an antique vase of terra cotta hue, from which rise honeysuckle stalks with their fresh green leaves and curly expanded white flowers. The discs of glass that fill the portholes, by being made to appear as if set in mahogany frames, allow of the introduction of curtains looped up in graceful form.

The saloons of Lloyds line and of the Hamburg Company's steamers present characteristic features of German decorative taste, as in great solidity of furnishing, bold wood carvings and cast metal work in strong relief. Here we find mirrors massively mounted in gilt brass, deeply paneled wood linings, high carved sofa frames, as lasting as the ship's timbers. Then there are strong contrasts of color in the details, paintings in brilliant hues on gold and green metallic grounds keep company with startlingly vivid depictions of sea scenes on canvas, such as Neptune sporting on the edge of his watery domain, or sea nymphs in midocean, on a nautilus shell-shaped barque, gazing on a star at the edge of a storm-laden cloud. Heads of the early northern sea-kings, carved in the round, project from panels of walnut. Dark textiles cover sofa and chair seats, and heavy hangings ornament the portholes. Yet with the superabundant dark hardwood comes relief in a free use of birdseye maple in the upper panels, enriched by bright hand painted tints, in white ceilings, with moldings picked out with gold, and pendants at the intersection of the beams, finely carved and lightly tinted.

A certain severe yet elegant simplicity is the feature of the staterooms. Sides and ceilings are of immaculate white. Lounges in crimson, green or blue plush, with hangings in similar or complementary hues to berths, constitute with narrow mahogany shelves surmounted by an oval mirror above the washing stand, the only ornaments, unless indeed some painted flower or other slight ornament appears on lower panel of latter.

Smoking-rooms on upper decks, with dark hardwood framework, and seats of horsehair, deep green and black leather, tables of marble or mahogany, offer little scope for decoration, except in brass and metal mountings.

Among minor details of decoration are the insignia of the particular line, as the medallion in gold-bronze, representing a star, set in the mahogany backs of the revolving seats of the White Star Line, or the crossed flags of England and the United States, embossed on the table glass, or enameled on the porcelain table sets of the Guion Line.

Nickel divides honors with brass for rails of sideboards and supports of the lamps and racks for glassware above tables.

The most ambitious style of decoration in ocean steamships is to be witnessed in the saloons of the superb French steamer *La Champagne*, which lately entered and left this port. The main saloon shows rows of enamel white columns fluted with gold and with gilded capitals; the ceiling sunk panels, are of lavender color, with tracery in pale blue and green and in gold. The lamps, clustered on pillars and dependent from the beams, are elegantly mounted in gilt brass. A generously served fireplace, with simple details in light mahogany and walnut, has an upper facing of costly painted tiles of sea nymphs. Rich walnut library cases and large mirrors decorate the two extremities of the saloon; panels of satin wood have scenes depicted in raised enamel work, also simple flower and scroll work in flatted color. The abundance of light from the uncolored roof, the paintings of ancient cities on the wall panels, the emblematic carved figures on the skylight cove and the dainty colors of the woodwork, with the rich crimson settees, present a most enlivening appearance. Imitative portholes towards the ceiling are filled in with looking glass.